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Educational Writings

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

The home economics curriculum.—The faculty of the Department of Home Economics of the School of Education, University of Chicago, with the collaboration of Professor H. O. Rugg, has completed what is probably the most significant and painstaking investigation¹ of the status of home economics in American schools which has yet been made. Several hundred courses of study from city school systems in twenty-two states have been examined, and the sixty-seven which gave information about the courses in home economics sufficiently full for purposes of study were analyzed critically and tabulated in detail.

The report, consisting of some 60,000 words, is partly descriptive and partly constructive. On the descriptive side the most striking facts revealed by the investigation are summarized in these five statements:

(1) there is little evidence of a continuous sequentially arranged curriculum in the public schools; (2) teaching emphasis is placed on information and technique rather than on powers of thinking and judgment; (3) vague statements of aims and outcomes are prevalent which show the work to be controlled by an interest in subject-matter rather than by educational and psychological motives; (4) there are few tests or scales with which to measure achievement or progress; (5) there is no definite program for curriculum-making [p. 1].

On the constructive side the investigators present suggestions for the improvement of each of the foregoing defects. Of these plans, those for tests, as indicated in No. 4, are most fully carried out. Tests for reasoning, information, and skill, together with the methods of derivation, are described.

The reader is struck with the elaborateness of the report, which in places has been carried to an extreme, as in the presentation of both tables and graphs for the clarification of material so simple that either one or the other, if either, would be sufficient; and also in the inclusion of highly technical description of the derivation of scales, which is too elaborate for those who make scales, and too condensed for the layman.

One is left with the impression that the writers have given their best efforts to the study of the problems and that their contributions are interesting, instructive, and scholarly.

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¹ *Home Economics in American Schools*. "Supplementary Educational Monographs," Vol. II, No. 6. Chicago: Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1920. Pp. xii+122. \$1.25.